CONNECTING PEW AND PULPIT IN A NEW PASTORATE: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ISSUES INFLUENCING THE METHODIST ITINERANT SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

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Christopher L. Zacharias

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Mentors:

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This project focuses on the process of establishing a pew/pulpit connection in a new pastorate. Using qualitative methods, the purpose of this project is to explore and gain insight from the ministry experience of the writer of this project as well as from the ministry experiences of other itinerate pastors as they have undertaken the process of establishing a connection with their new congregations. The writer's hope in providing these insights is that they will help ministers in new pastorate situations to address the challenge of establishing a connection with their new congregations.

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In the language of the New Testament's Apostle Paul, "I am a debtor." To the United Theological Seminary for having a program that assists clergy persons in becoming more effective leaders in this 21st century, I owe you my profound appreciation. There are no words to describe my appreciation for Rev. Dr. William Curtis and Rev. Dr. Lance Watson who patiently and strategically guided me through this doctoral process. They have extended themselves fully to enhancing and enriching my ministry life in order that I may become a powerful servant of God. Moreover, I am humbled by the opportunity to have shared empowering fellowship with the other Curtis-Watson fellows, who have been a positive influence in my life. I will always reflect upon our days together with a smile.

It has been a joy and a privilege to have served as an itinerant pastor within the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church over these past seven years. The time shared has been instrumental for my overall spiritual development, both as a person and as a pastor. I have learned immensely from all of my former Episcopal leaders, presiding elders, and fellow itinerant ministers of all rank, which has enabled me to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, a great indebtedness is owed to all the parishes I have had the privilege to pastor. Truly, my ministry has been formed by

all of you. To each member of the churches I have pastored I extend my heartfelt love and thanks.

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To the ray of sunshine, my stroke of love, and jewel of my day, my wife Juliet, thanksgiving is extended for granting me the companionship needed to reach this

educational and ministry goal. God certainly sent His very best when he sent me a priceless gift such as you. I am strengthened and empowered because I have you journeying along with me in ministry every step of the way. I love you!

Above all else, to God who is able to keep me from falling, to Him I give all the Glory!

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation contains some of the researcher's results concerning connecting the pew and pulpit in the early stages of a new pastorate. The purpose of this project is to explore and document the process, using qualitative methods, of connecting pew and pulpit in the early stages of a new pastorate. This process should provide a framework for identifying, addressing, and overcoming the barriers that under gird the pew/pulpit disconnection, in hopes that a connection will develop, thereby setting the foundation for the establishment of a healthy pastoral relationship. Engulfed throughout all the chapters in this document is the most recent development of the researcher's spiritual growth as a person and as a pastor. These following chapters entail the in-depth analysis of the researcher's own journey in the process of trying to connect the pew and the pulpit within the Methodist Itinerant system of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.

Chapter One of this document highlights how and why the researcher came to investigate and explore this present project by providing the writer's spiritual autobiography, ministry context, and the early foundation of this spiritual journey. Chapter Two explains the area of ministry in which the researcher is involved and the scope of ministry the writer is addressing within the context of scholarly literature, while Chapter Three explores the historical, biblical, and theological framework behind the foundations of Methodism. In Chapter Four, the writer details the methodology and

design used to approach the process of connecting the pew and pulpit, while Chapter Five identifies the major themes behind what is causing a disconnect between the pew and pulpit. Furthermore, the writer's own analysis of the insights learned through this journey are discussed. Then, the final chapter, Chapter Six, contains the researcher's reflections upon the project.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The focus of this project is to explore and document the process of connecting pew and pulpit in the early stages of a new pastorate. This process should provide a framework for identifying, addressing, and overcoming the barriers that under gird the pew/pulpit disconnection, in hopes that a connection will develop, thereby setting the foundation for the establishment of a healthy pastoral relationship.

As we live in a postmodern era, the church has found itself divided, broken and separated on generational issues, denominational loyalty, traditions, and moral and ethical concerns. The church culture has shifted in an extreme manner, where today's present mainline churches are failing to address the growing need of cutting edge ministry. Many mainline denominations that adhere to an itinerant system are having difficulty meeting the challenge of addressing today's ever changing culture. The writer argues that this is because within an itinerant system the constant movement of itinerant pastors enhances the pastors' inability to make a connection with his/her congregation. This constant movement of pastors prohibits the pastor from building a sense of unity and trust between the pew and the pulpit so that they together can do the work of the Kingdom in their local community.

In a world full of chaos, confusion, and cultural ignorance, the church today needs congregations and pastors to work together for the cause of Christ. The Methodist slogan has always been "Reaching the World for Christ." This cannot be accomplished, however, if itinerant pastors spend more time meeting the ministry needs of a particular denomination, conference or district than they do addressing the needs of their local congregation, local community and the world.

Methodism was founded on the premise of Christian Perfection, Christian Evangelism, and Human Liberation. Jesus said it best in Lk. 4:18, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed" (NIV). When the central focus of the Methodist church has shifted in a direction that has a more inward focus than outward focus, "Reaching the World for Christ" is nothing more than a resounding gong and clanging cymbal.

When the itinerant pastors are able to become more stable (not moving so often), they can focus primarily on the body of Christ and the surrounding community in which they have the privilege to build the Kingdom of God. Therefore, a connection can be fostered between the pew and the pulpit in hopes that a healthy pastoral relationship can take place and viable ministry may be brought forth to the glory of God.

The Situation and Context

The beginning of any ministry can be a trying time for any person wrestling with the call of God. It is a period of wrestling with one's understanding of self and one's understanding of the purpose God has placed upon his or her life. God also challenges those whom He calls to discern His purpose for his or her life as well as to fulfill the mission to which God has called him or her. The call of God can be thought of as a transitional period in which a person transitions from one way of life into a new way of life that is led and directed by God.

Since the beginning of Christopher L. Zacharias' college life in 1991, he has been a person transitioning from one place to another—from one way of life into a new way of life. In college, Chris had to transition from being a college student/athlete to becoming a father to his first-born son Marcus. Christopher's work experience while in college and after college were much of the same: transitions between jobs, holding multiple jobs, and finally enlisting in the Army of our country's military forces. By the time he graduated from college in 1996, Chris had attended school at three college campuses. He seemed accustomed to transitioning into new experiences, and once he was called into the ministry, the pattern of movement and transition continued.

The ministry life of Reverend Christopher L. Zacharias is a prime example of a minister who is constantly on the move and in transition. Rev. Zacharias is an itinerant pastor within the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. He has been in the itinerancy for seven years, and within those seven years, Rev. Zacharias has pastored four different churches. To be an itinerate means to travel. For A. M. E. Zion ministers, it means to

travel from place to place, from station to station, from local church to local church. As a minister within an itinerant system, permanency is often not a given, as it is understood that an itinerant minister is one who is not permanently settled in one location. To itinerate means to travel the circuit serving wherever one is appointed and sent by the bishop.

At the time that this document was initially written, Rev. Zacharias had served as Senior Pastor of Mount Pisgah A. M. E. Zion Church, located in the rural community of Bedford, Pennsylvania; St. Paul A. M. E. Zion Church, located in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church, located in the urban community of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He also served as Senior Pastor at the Metropolitan A. M. E. Zion Church in Ridgewood, New Jersey.

African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was established as a separate entity from the first Methodist Episcopal Church in New York. The separation occurred because of certain prejudices against Blacks, which did not allow for the Black members of the M.E. Society to become ordained ministers and/or participate in the Lord's Supper with their white counterparts. Although the M.E. church in New York licensed a number of Black men to preach, they were prohibited from preaching to Whites. Such treatment was not tolerated by the Black members and led to the separation of most of them from the M.E. church in New York.

The Black preachers continued to pursue their separation from the M.E. Society as they started holding meetings among themselves. During these meetings one of the

many different things that were established was the reasons why they would not return to the mother church to continue being supervised by them. According to John Jamison Moore, their reason was simply that they could not return to the former church while the racial prejudice that drove them out continued to exist. Although they departed from the M.E. Society, they did keep much of the M.E. form of government.

The change in their religious situation in 1796 brought many influential and intelligent Black members to call a meeting at a member's house. At this meeting, a committee was appointed to wait on the approval of Bishop Francis Asbury of the M. E. Church. The member's meeting was composed of fellow brethren: Francis Jacobs, William Brown, Peter Williams, Abraham Thompson and June Scott. Then, the following men went forward to seek a place of worship: Francis Jacobs, William Brown, Peter Williams, Abraham Thompson, June Scott, Samuel Pointer, Thomas Miller, James Varick, and William Hamilton. Later in 1796, James Varick, Abraham Thompson, William Millers, and others formed the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in New York City. This newly founded church was a branch off of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The society of this new denomination called itself the "Freedom Church" at the time because the founders decided to dedicate it to the liberation of the human spirit. Spiritual, social, and economic freedoms were very important to the founders. James Varick, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, and Sojourner Truth were some of A. M. E. Zion's better known members.

Today, the A. M. E. Zion denomination stretches across five continents, has 3,000 churches, and has an active membership of 1.5 million people. The A. M. E. Zion Church

has founded and contributed to a handful of institutions and associations. A few of these are Livingstone College, Lomax Hannon Junior College in Alabama, Clinton Junior College in South Carolina, Dinwiddy Institute in Virginia, and African Methodist Episcopal Zion Junior College in Monrovia, Liberia, West Africa.

Synergy

In looking at the spiritual pilgrimage and the context of Rev. Christopher L. Zacharias, one word stands out—transition. It is apparent that throughout his life and ministry Christopher has been in transition, serving short periods of time within several different arenas. Being in itinerant ministry, experiencing first hand the impact of moving from ministry context to ministry context, has allowed Christopher to see the need for investigating the pew/pulpit connection in a new pastorate.

The challenge for an itinerant pastor is providing an effective and efficient ministry within a transitional system, a transitional church, and a transitional community. Transitioning from one church to another church can be difficult for an itinerant minister especially when the minister is placed into an already established congregation.

Within each established congregation is an already existing community that has its own character and personality. Many of these established congregations have their own way of doing things, their own understanding of ministry, and their own understanding or expectation of leadership. Much of the congregation's character is largely formed by its history, including what has happened in its past, unresolved issues it may have, along with how its past may affect its future.

An itinerant minister or pastor who enters an established congregation cannot ignore the culture of the church, the culture of its community, nor his or her own make up. It is this writer's intention to document the struggle to become a better itinerant pastor, in hopes that it will help other itinerant pastors to maximize their effectiveness in short-term assignments.

Identifying the Problem

The Methodist system has in its design ministers who are itinerant pastors. Ministers in the A. M. E. Zion church are not "called" by a local church body; neither are they "selected" by the church's lay leadership. In the A. M. E. Zion Church, the resident bishop, who acts on behalf of the whole church, is empowered to make and fix all appointments in the Episcopal area of which the annual conference is a part. This bishop is the one, therefore, who appoints ministers.[1]

To itinerate means to travel. For A. M. E. Zion ministers, it means to travel from place to place, from station to station, from local church to local church. Historically, for Methodism in America, a traveling ministry has long been understood to be a necessary and critical part of the church's life. Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke, two American Methodist ministers wrote:

> All the different orders which compose our conferences are employed in the traveling line; and our local preachers are, in some degree, traveling preachers. Everything is kept moving as far as possible; and we will be bold to say, that, next to the grace of God, there is nothing like this for keeping the whole body alive from the center of the circumference on every hand.[2]

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[1] *The Book of Discipline of the A. M. E. Zion Church* (Charlotte, NC: The A. M. E. Zion Publishing House, 2000), 85.

[2] James K. Mathews, *Set Apart to Serve* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985), 197.

The founding father of Methodism, John Wesley, agrees with Asbury and Coke. It was said that there was nothing in this world that he dreaded more than a preacher who was not always in motion.[3] The sending of itinerant or traveling ministers is based on the Methodist understanding of their mission—"to reform the nation, particularly the Church, and to spread Scriptural holiness over the land."[4] The motto for Methodism is "the world for Christ." The A. M. E. Zion Church's mission is similar in its philosophy.

This itinerant, or traveling ministry, is based on the premise of how itinerant ministers view themselves as called by God to serve their church as ministers. Itinerant ministers believe that the Church, and not the individual ministers, is better able to decide where a person's gift and signs of God's grace can best be used to serve the Church, meet its temporal and spiritual needs, and help the Church fulfill its mission in the world. A. M. E. Zion ministers, once ordained as elders, make a covenant before God, their bishop and fellow clergymen and women to place their lives, and if married, their families into the hands of the bishop. The bishop, in consultation with the presiding elders, determines where they will minister.

In the A. M. E. Zion church, itinerant ministers receive appointments annually. Every minister who is appointed to a local church is assigned only for one year at a time, and in some cases this can lead to reassignment to a different location each year. Although it is not guaranteed that an itinerant pastor will be moved each year, the system is such that it is also not guaranteed that the pastor will stay beyond that year. Not

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[3] Ibid.

[4] *The Book of Discipline of the A. M. E. Zion Church* (Charlotte, NC: The A. M. E. Zion Publishing House, 2000), 44.

knowing if the pastor will have the opportunity to continue ministry beyond the year's appointment, therefore, makes it difficult to serve in an effective and efficient manner as well as make a healthy connection with his/her congregation.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

When Jesus left his disciples a second time before ascending into heaven he left them with a Christian mission and mandate to follow: Mt. 28:18-22:

> Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

This mandate and mission was also spoken of in the Book of Acts where Jesus tells his apostles to be his witnesses to the whole world. Luke writes in Acts 1:8b: "And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Witnesses of Christ who are pastors, preachers, and evangelist within an itinerant system are sent to travel from place to place, from station to station, from local church to local church proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. It is the writer's contention that many struggle with being fruitful and effective during their short-term assignments.

It is debatable within the A. M. E. Zion church, and Methodism as a whole, whether or not short-term pastorates are a viable way to build healthy and stable churches. Most church growth experts, however, suggest that long-term pastorates make

for healthier churches. The writer argues that this is because in short-term pastorates the time is limited for the pastor to grow as a leader of that congregation and establish a healthy connection with the congregants in the pew, whereas in longer pastorates time is an advantage.

Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Wright, Jr., Senior Pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, Illinois, alludes to the importance of the pastor being connected to the people as he writes that being a pastor does not mean being six feet above the persons to whom one preaches.[5] Rev. Wright reflects upon the writing of Dr. Lora-Ellen McKinney, who refers to the words of Gardner C. Taylor. Dr. Taylor uses the imagery and language found in the Book of Ezekiel where God tells the people to choose a watchman from their own coasts, one who lives in the city where they live and would stand on the wall and cry out when the enemy approaches. Ezekiel was a person invested in the lives of the people and the community he was serving. He was not above them, but one of them. Dr. McKinney builds her book from a laity perspective that a pastor should preach in a way that shows that they are a person "from the coasts" of those whom they serve.

This connection between the pew and pulpit was a primary felt need of Rev. Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson, the Senior Pastor of the Grace Baptist Church in Mount Vernon, New York. He emphasizes strongly in his book *The Power of The Pew,* that the Call to Partnership provides the mandate for trying to more effectively bring the resources of the pew into full partnership with the pulpit, in hopes that the two parties will work simultaneously in fulfilling the church's mission for redemptive change in a broken world. Dr. Richardson saw the potential effectiveness of all churches as being

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[5] Lora-Ellen McKinney, *View From The Pew: What Preachers Can Learn from Church Members* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2004), xiv.

found in laypersons, and if the pew was empowered by the pulpit to function in accordance with the mandates of ministry given by our Lord and Savior, a strong union would exist for the work of ministry.

Dr. Richardson writes that a prevailing mentality exists in many of our pews that the responsibility for ministry rests with the clergy or the ordained community—that the congregation hires the minister to do its ministry.[6] He further states that the responsibility of ministry is to be shared, where the minister equips the pew to do ministry. Roy M. Oswald suggests that this is where the "disconnect" between the two parties can occur. He refers to it as a role identification problem. He writes that, in general, the laity is genuinely confused about what the role of the pastor should entail because each lay person has a different expectation of his/her pastor.[7] Furthermore, Oswald states that role clarity needs to be constantly defined, and the process should begin at the start of a new pastorate.

Role negotiation, as defined by Oswald, involves dealing as openly as possible with the differences between the pastor's own images of pastoring and the member's expectations.[8] Jan G. Linn expresses the same idea as Oswald because she often teaches on the premise of what ministers wish church members knew and on what church members wish ministers knew.[9] Her research found that a lot of the "disconnect" between

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[6] W. Franklyn Richardson, *The Power of The Pew: The Call to Partnership* (Nashville, TN: Townsend Press, 1986), 5.

[7] Roy M. Oswald, *New Beginnings: A Pastorate Start Up Workbook* (Washington, DC: Alban, 1993), 40.

[8] Ibid., 41.

[9] Jan G. Linn, *What Ministers Wish Church Members Knew* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1993), 3.

pew and pulpit centered on not only role clarity, but also on misperceptions caused by the two parties not listening to one another.

George Barna, in a recent study, discovered that pastors worldwide were having difficulty in maintaining a genuine connection with their congregations. Barna's study states that pastors brim with self-confidence in many areas of ministry but admit it is a challenge to maintain a genuine connection with other people.[10] The studies provide seven insights concerning the self-perceptions pastors have about themselves which conflict with the views of those they serve. Itinerant pastors have this same problem of self-perception, misconceptions, and misunderstanding which causes a disconnect between them and the pew. It becomes compounded further when their time spent with a particular congregation is limited.

It is the writer's hope that the insights learned from his own ministry journey and from this doctoral process of investigating the impact that the itinerate system of ministry has on connecting the pew and pulpit in a new pastorate will help other itinerant pastors to become more effective in their short-term assignments.

[10] George A. Barna, "Pastors Feel Confident in Ministry, But Many Struggle in their Interaction with Others," [article online]; available from http:// www.barna.org; Internet; accessed 6 July 2006.

CHAPTER THREE

FOUNDATIONAL FOCUS OF METHODISM

Historical Foundation

Methodism had its beginnings long before John and Charles Wesley established institutionalized Methodism according to Rupert Davies. Davies states, "It is quite wrong to think of Methodism as coming into existence in the time of Wesley. Methodism is, in fact, a recurrent form of Christianity, which is sometimes contained within the frontiers of the Church at large, and is sometimes driven, or drives itself, over those frontiers to find a territory of its own."[11]

Methodism has always been rooted in Christianity but was never given a name until its separation from the established Church of England. Much like Christianity, the beginnings of Methodism were new and seemingly against the grain of mainline religious thinking of that time period, when, the founders of Methodism attempted to stay true to Christian beliefs and at the same time stress those elements of the Christian faith that they felt were being neglected.

[11] Rupert Davies, *Methodism,* (London, UK: Epworth Press, 1976), 11.

During the eighteenth-century, the doctrine of Christianity was written out in seven steps according to Davies. The first step was the complete acceptance of the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, which were laid down in the creed and must be proven in the devotional life of a person through practical charity. The second involved understanding that the heart of Christianity lies within the relationship between God and man. The third stressed the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the person of the Trinity that was often neglected by Christian institutions. The fourth was the attempt to embrace the life of Christ as it is written within the New Testament. This included personal and social holiness and the formation of small groups to edify, instruct, encourage, and correct one another? The fifth was the zeal to show the love of God through the spreading of the Gospel. The sixth was to have a commitment to the physical and spiritual well being of the underprivileged. The seventh was the development of the lay structure to produce Church Order, in which the laity would stand alongside the ministry with different but functioning parts, sharing in the ministry of preaching or teaching the gospel, caring for the flock, and administering the daily activities of the church's operations.[12]

One of the tasks of Methodism was to keep unity in the Church of England by maintaining Christian doctrine within the Church of England while addressing Christianity as a whole with more seriousness. Davies states that throughout the history of the Christian Church many groups that sought to form other denominations, such as the Lutherans from Catholicism for instance, kept all or most of the doctrines of

[12] Ibid.

Christianity when they formed their own community within the larger community of the Christian church.[13]

These groups did not deny the value of the liturgy, sacraments or ministry of the larger Church from which they separated (whether they separated voluntarily or was excommunicated) nor did they cast any doubt on Christianity or the denomination from which they separated. In separating themselves, therefore, they did not become "sects" in the ordinary meaning of the word. They did not identify distinctive doctrines that veered away from basic Christian doctrine, nor did they establish a completely separate organization within the Body of Christ; rather they sought to be a Church within the Church.[14]

Pre-Methodist Ideologies

Historically, Methodism found its base in the *Didache*. The *Didache* is the teaching about the Christian faith conveyed to new converts. Furthermore, the *Didache* is an early manual on the Christian life and Church practice found in A.D. 100. In A.D. 160 or 170, an example of Methodist ideology was demonstrated by a man called Montanus in Phrygia. Montanus demonstrated an early form of Methodism as he lived in Phrygia, which is one of the territories of modern-day Turkey. Phrygia was the traditional home of orgiastic worship of the "Great Mother Goddess." Under various names, Great Mother attracted much of the religious devotion until Christianity triumphed. Historians claim that Montanus was a converted priest of her cult and possibly a eunuch. Some scholars suggest that he did not bring any of the cult ideas over into Christianity, but Davies

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., 12.

believes that Montanus did bring his fiery zeal. When Montanus had become a Christian, he was strongly moved to counteract two perils that seemed to him to be threatening the Church—Gnosticism and institutionalism.[15]

Gnosticism offered to the spiritual and intellectual elite a special kind of gnosis or knowledge. Believers in Gnosticism were assured in various ways that troublesome world matter, including their bodies, was wholly divorced from the world of the spirit. The premise of Gnosticism denies the incarnation of Jesus Christ, which Montanus knew was problematic to the Christian faith, because Jess is the Christian believer's access to God.[16] Montanus perceived the second threat to the Church to be institutionalism. Montanus believed that the tight organizational structure, presided over by bishops, was throttling the work of the Holy Spirit.[17]

The bishops of Phygia became alarmed at what Montanus and his followers were teaching. Prisca and Maximilla were two prominent women who believed the Montanus doctrine.[18] When Montanus and Prisca did not survive the full opposition of the Church, Maximilla assumed leadership of the movement. The bishops eventually outlawed her and her followers from the Church.

Montanism spread throughout Asia Minor and North Africa. In Asia Minor, Montanism was disbanded and finally ceased. However, in North Africa, the cessation of Montanism was more difficult. Records indicate that martyrs who adhered to Montanism suffered at the hand of the Emperor Septimius Severus in A.D. 203. It was these African

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[15] Davies, *Methodism*, 13.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

Montanists who held its ministers to a higher vocation. Davies suggests that they even brought the great philosopher Tertullian over to their way of thinking.

The Middle Ages also demonstrated some examples of Methodism through Waldensians. Peter Faldo-Waldo, the founder of Waldensians, was a rich man from Lyons, France, who was determined to know the Bible in his own language. He vowed to seek after perfection, and to preach the Gospel throughout the countryside. His actions of giving away his wealth and traveling to preach, along with his other deeds inspired other laymen to preach in the same way he did, and these itinerant preachers became known as the Poor Men of Lyons. Faldo-Waldo was denied the license to preach by the Lateran Council of 1179, but still continued to preach and was soon excommunicated by Pope Lucius III.

Soon after, a strict code was developed against Faldo-Waldo and his followers. They were considered heretics, but their heresy seemed due to their disobedience to Papal authority. There is no real evidence that they did not uphold the full faiths of the creeds. Their approach to the Bible was different and their beliefs excluded such things as penance, prayers to the saints, oath-taking, and killing even during wartime because it was not approved in Scripture. Waldensians demonstrated many Methodist qualities such as holiness, lay preaching, concern for the poor, and lifting up of the Holy Spirit over any ecclesiastical rules. At the same time, the followers of Faldo kept the Creeds of the Church.

Similar to the Waldensian movement, was the case of Francis of the Roman Catholic Church. Francis, like Waldo, was rich. He also gave his earthly goods to the poor and traveled from place to place preaching the Gospel. Francis used the laity in a

similar manner to they way that Methodists do. Waldo and Francis, who were laymen with little social status, had a considerable impact on John Wesley because of their preaching and use of their God-given gifts.

Both Francis and Wesley were proponents of Christian perfection and attracted those who were after the same quest. Together, as contemporaries, they encouraged their preachers to support and encourage one another and to demonstrate the love of God to the underprivileged. Many of Francis's rules were repeated in Wesley's Twelve Rules of Helper. Francis divided Italy up into provinces and assigned each province a minister, which later came to be known as circuits and superintendents during the movement of Methodism in the eighteenth-century.

Some recognition can be given to the Church of the Brethren, later known as the Moravians, for having an influence on John Wesley and the development of Methodism. Peter of Chelcic in Bohemia founded the Brethren, and like many others he was upset with the Papacy. His dispute came about over the wars that followed the execution of John Hus in 1415, which called for Hus' followers to leave the political life and led to them eventually living in seclusion, practicing their Christian beliefs. It was not until 1467 that they were able to convince a bishop of the Waldensians to consecrate a bishop for them.

The goal of the Brethren was to recover the spirit of the Apostolic Church, which was a similar goal of Methodism. John Wesley went a different route than did the Brethren, later Moravians, but he did learn a lot from them. In fact, during his time with them Wesley learned German so he could be in closer relationship with them, and as Henry Carter points out, Wesley's time with them influenced his thoughts of the

Christian Church. The Moravian way of life turned Wesley's thoughts toward the beginnings of the Christian Church, and the aim was the revival of apostolic teaching and practice.[19]

Martin Luther had a great impact on John Wesley in the seventeenth-century with his concern with Pietism. Pietism is the withdrawal from the life of society and its secular values. This was not the real intent of Lutherans as it originated, but its goal was to reform the Church from the inside out, calling for it to be more Lutheran and Scriptural. This attempt was lead by a Lutheran pastor named Phillip Jakob Spencer. He brought his laity together to deepen their faith and religious life. The Elector of Brandenburg and Augustus Hermann Francke supported much of his efforts. The views about Pietism spread throughout Germany and had a major influence on religious thought in Germany leading into the nineteenth century.[20]

Pietism had a great influence on the hymns of Paulus Gerhardt, who focused on the devotion to the Person of Jesus Christ and the love of God. Several German hymns were translated into English by John Wesley and sung during his missionary days in Georgia. Pietism did become an important belief within Methodism, for it focused on reforming the inner life of the Church while keeping the Church's orthodoxy with its devotion to God through Jesus Christ.

Luther's writings were read frequently by Charles Wesley as noted in his Journal (6th June, 1738): "In the evening I read Luther, as usual, to a large company of our friends." John was moved greatly by Luther's writings, especially by Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. Listening to the readings of Luther speak of the change which

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[19] Henry Carter, *The Methodist Heritage*, 41.

[20] Ibid.

works in the heart through faith in Christ moved Wesley while in Aldersgate. Henry Betts quoted a passage from Wesley that closely captured the essence of Wesley's famous saying, "I felt my heart strangely warm":

> Faith cometh through the hearing of the Gospel, through which word Christ is preached to us, to have died, to have been buried, and to have risen again from death for us. Therefore our whole justification is of God. Faith also and the Spirit is of God: they come not of ourselves. Wherefore let us conclude that faith alone justifies, and that faith alone fufilleth the Law. For faith through the merit of Christ obtaineth the Holy Spirit, which Spirit doth make us new hearts, doth exhilarate us, doth excite and inflame our hearts, that it may do those things willingly, of love, which the Law commandeth; and so, at the last, good works indeed do proceed freely from the faith which worketh so mightily, and which is so lively in our hearts.[21]

Charles Wesley had a similar conversion experience to that of his brother John. The words of Luther can be heard in a song written by Charles Wesley soon after his conversion. This hymn was written to mark 'The Anniversary Day of One's Conversion.'

> Then with my heart I first believed,
> Believed with faith divine;
> Power with the Holy Ghost received
> To call the savior mine.
> I felt my Lord's atoning blood
> Close to my soul applied;
> Me, me he loved-the Son of God
> For me, for me He died![22]

Pre-Methodist Ideologies and the Christian Heritage in England

England was introduced to Christianity in the sixth Century by St. Augustine of Canterbury, whose strategy was to convert the Saxon King Ethelbert by first converting his queen, Bertha. Richard Heitzenrater states that the interface between religion and

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[21] Henry Betts, *The Spirit of Methodism* (London, UK: Epworth Press, 1943), 21-22.

[22] Herpert Davis, *Poetical Works* vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 300.

politics was certainly not without friction. He points out several confrontations within his book *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*: between Thomas Becket and Henry II, Anselm and the investiture controversy, John Ball's sermon against Richard II, and many others tension between church and crown.

In Augustine's era the monarchy challenged the pope's prerogative to appoint English bishops all in an attempt to restrain the religious authorities in the land. John Wycliffe claimed the Bible as an alternate authority to the pope who was under heavy French influence. The identity of the English nation rested on its monarchy and it was the monarchy that would develop the religious establishment. Heitzenrater suggested that monarchy is the central feature of English history, which was apparent during the period of the English Reformation during the time of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I. He writes that although religious reformers gained some renown for their ideas and programs, especially on the European continent, the implementation of their reforms depended in large part upon the wishes and whims of the political power structures of such countries as Germany, France, and England. The fate of reform movements hinged upon the positive or negative inclinations of individual monarchs or princes.[23]

Henry VIII was the first to begin separating the English Church from the Church of Rome and place it under monarchy rule. Later he declared himself head of the Church of England. This was confirmed during the Reformation Parliament through an Erastian form of government that declared Henry the head and the Church of England and declared this the official religion of the state. The Henrician Church came into existence

[23] Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodist* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 3.

and produced the first official statement of English faith called the Ten Articles of Religion (1536). This was a brief statement of traditional beliefs that omitted protestant bias against transubstantiation, celibacy of the clergy, and the most notable changes were in polity and liturgy. In 1539, a revision of this statement was developed called the Six Articles, which contained more conservative beliefs that reaffirmed the doctrine of transubstantiation and reaffirmed the need for celibate clergy. [24]

King Henry's close advisor Archbishop Thomas Cranmer began publishing a collection of sermons that modeled correct theological expositions for the clergy. These were to be read from the pulpit by the clergy to assure that the people would hear sound orthodoxy doctrine. This collection of sermons was known as the Book of Homilies (1546). Cranmer went on to write the Book of Common Prayer and it became the official liturgy of the Established Church. He wrote the Forty-Two Articles, which had a more Protestant viewpoint than orthodoxy. In those articles there is a Calvinistic bent towards predestination.[25]

During the reign of Elisabeth I both Calvinism and Roman Catholicism grew. Both schools of thought produced books that influence the English speaking world. These books were Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* and the Geneva Bible. Foxe's book helped spur anti-Catholic thought and propelled Calvin's Geneva Bible. Many people carried this Bible around and used it for devotional and Protestant theological interpretation. In many respects it became the guidebook for church reform. The English Calvinists became known as 'Puritans,' who worked towards reform that would purify the church.

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

During her reign Elizabeth I tried to find a middle ground that would protect the national church that was formed under Henry VIII from the traditional "Catholic" claims of Rome, while at the same time provide a balance with the radical reform of the Puritans. Her attempt was short lived, and ten years later after establishing herself as head of the Church, Pope Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth in 1570. Richard Hooker undertook a project that assisted Elizabeth with her attempts and helped those who were Roman Catholic keep their loyalty to the Queen and to the Pope. This work was called *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1595).

Hooker's laws were threefold. The first law stated that Scripture provides the main truth and the basic test of Christian veracity, but was not to be used in the manner of the Puritan's understanding of *sola scriptura* in that scripture was not a handbook that provided specific answers to all questions that should be followed to the letter. He suggested that the scriptures, the primary source of truth, could provide guidelines for thought and actions in many areas. The second law deals with Tradition. It provides the thoughts from the earliest centuries of Christianity that are closest to the purity of the apostolic witness and gives an authentic reflection and explication of the biblical testimony. Hooker saw the value of tradition as an early authoritative explanation of scriptural truth. The third law deals with Reason, which furnishes the means by which scripture and tradition can be scrutinized and understood by thoughtful persons—revealed truth may at times be above reason, but never contrary to reason. Hooker was willing to discern the connection between revelation and reason as sources and measures of truth in order to develop doctrines that were cogent and credible. Hooker became the standard authority and Samuel Wesley, John Wesley's father, encouraged all inspiring

clergy to be grounded in Hooker's work. Hooker's framework became the framework for John Wesley's thinking that produced the Wesleyan Quadrilateral.[26]

Jacob Arminius challenged the Calvanist theology embraced by the Puritans regarding predestination, which was developed under the influence of Theodore Beza. Calvin's' thought was grounded in the concept of God's sovereignty. This implies God's omniscience, God's omnipotence, and God's omnipresence, which implies His total control. Arminius argues that humans have a choice. He says that humans do make real and free choices. Even though God does know ahead of time what is going to happen, God does not cause such decisions to be made by humans. The issue comes down to the role of humanity in the process of salvation. Heitzenrater writes that the assertion of free will, when associated with the question of salvation, seemed to imply that human beings, of their own free will, could do something that would effect their salvation.[27] The reformers said that people are saved by God's grace alone and that salvation is effected by Faith alone—a view that Wesley adopted. Luther and Calvin believed in predestination, which states that God chooses those to whom salvation will be given, and that persons can do nothing to earn this gift. Arminian challenged the view that Christ died only for a few by saying that Christ died for everyone. This debate between Arminian and both Calvinists and Lutherans continued through the establishment of the Methodist movement.

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People called Methodist*, 11.

The Rise of Methodism

John Wesley began his seven-year classical educational program to train him for the university in June 1720, in Oxford at the Charterhouse School in London. The majority of the students there were preparing to be in government, medicine, law or the Church. In 1724, John Wesley finished his undergraduate degree and was inspired to continue his education there. To become a minister in England one must be examined by a bishop prior to ordination as a deacon. Then, after two years probation in that status, including continuing studies towards a Master's Degree, another examination takes place by the bishop and then ordination is received as a priest.

While beginning his studies for ordination as a deacon, Wesley began meditating on Hooker's laws and realized the importance of faith and good works. This helped him understand that the use of all the means of grace that God provided would help him follow after Christ's teachings. Another influence in his theological development was the piety of the holy living tradition. He began reading books on pietism such as *De Imitatione Christi* regularly. Others included Jeremy Taylor's *Rule and Exercises of Holy living and Holy Dying (1650),* Robert's Nelson's *The Practice of True Devotion (1708),* and William Beveridge's *Private Thoughts Upon Religion* (1709).

It was Jeremy Taylor who put Wesley on the path of seeking holiness. Taylor suggested to him that the first rule of holy living is care of your time. Wesley took this suggestion very seriously and began to keep a diary. In this pursuit Wesley made a theological discovery that holiness was an inner reality. As Wesley writes, "True religion

was seated in the heart and that God's law extended to all our thoughts as well as words and actions." Wesley made a serious attempt at living holy and this spiritual quest provided the focus for Wesley's theology.

John Wesley found little or no peer support groups among his colleagues and friends during his early years at Oxford. His brother Charles Wesley, while serving at Christ Church, had an experience that woke him out of his lethargic sleep. He wrote to John and asked him to be his tutor, as was suggested by the University of Oxford. These tutors helped students by explaining the Articles of Religion and encouraging the students to do frequent and careful reading of the Scriptures. Charles asked specifically for help with how to keep a diary or logbook of his thoughts, activities, and concerns. Keeping a diary was what John Wesley did very diligently and is a main reason why much of his actions, history, and thoughts were recorded with much accuracy and are available today.

These tutoring endeavors by John Wesley and Charles Wesley led to other men coming together for the serious study of Scripture, prayer, religious conversation and the singing of hymns. John and Charles Wesley, William Morgan and Bob Kirkham are noted for the first manifestations of what became Oxford Methodism. Later in the summer of 1729, the group met regularly at different times and locations between each other's abode in and around Oxford. Their weekly meetings eventually spread into charitable activities such as the visiting the elderly, teaching orphan children, caring for the poor and visiting prisons. Their charitable activity spread throughout Oxford, and the people took notice of it and began to name the four 'The Holy Club," a name that taunted the group on the one hand, nonetheless demonstrated the characteristics of being a Methodist.

At first this idea of group study and pursuit was not John Wesley's idea, but it did coincide with his spiritual quest for what he called "a right state of soul." Wesley, however, provided the leadership and direction for the group, which gave a spiritual pulse to the Methodist pursuit of salvation. John Wesley frequently traveled preaching, and he recorded his travels daily within his diary. Each day of the week was filled with preaching, visiting, teaching, counseling, and advising.

John Wesley's methods can be best described at 'meditative piety' an avenue to promote holiness of the heart. He tried vigorously to lead a devoted Christian life as best he could. As he stated in one of his letters (Letters, 25:318), his attempt was to search after the "hope of his calling: to know that our hope is sincerity, not perfection; not to do well, but to do our best." This thinking gave John Wesley his early support against criticism he received as well as gave him the awareness of his own shortcomings. His desire was to strive for perfection, a total obedience to God, and the inner purity of heart promoted by meditation on the virtues of the Spirit. Many of his colleagues, however, saw his attempts as legalistic works of righteousness.

John Clayton had a big impact on Wesley, while at Oxford with him for six months. Clayton helped Wesley increase his discipline, which became apparent in Wesley's weekly schedule of works of piety and mercy. John Wesley and the group he met and studies with added what was known as "stationary fasts" every Wednesday and Friday, which followed the pattern of the Early Church. During these times of fasting they had nothing to eat before breaking the fast at 3:00 p.m. on those days. Clayton also influenced Wesley in "collecting prayers," which introduced Wesley to publishing. Wesley's first work came out in 1733 called "Collection of Forms of Prayers for Every

Day in the Week." Clayton gave Wesley substantial advice regarding the organizational structure of the Methodist Church by introducing Wesley to what is known as subsidiary groups.

Wesley's pursuit of spiritual holiness and direction heighten at the illness of his father who was prodding him to take over the church parish, and though he did not want to do parish ministry, Wesley succumb to his father's dying wish. After a short term as a parish priest, Wesley returned to Oxford to continue his pursuit of Christian perfection. An invitation came to him from John Burton who wanted to know if Wesley and some of his friends would be interested in a mission trip to Savannah, Georgia. After prayer and consultation with friends, Wesley agreed and went to Georgia to begin a new society. John Wesley had several goals in mind: the first was to save his own soul, the second was the hope of doing more good in America, and the third was to promote the grand scheme of Methodism as he did in Oxford.[28]

While sailing to America John Wesley came in contact with some German Moravians. He was fascinated by their extreme faith due to an incident that occurred onboard, in which water came spilling into the ship and while others ran in panic the Moravians continued to worship and praise God. During his two-year stay in Savannah, Georgia, the Moravian became a huge factor in the development of Wesley's theology and in the structure behind Methodism. His two year stay also helped shape the development of Wesley's thinking about the church and its mission to the world. In Georgia, he stayed under the tutelage of the German Moravians and pietism. The Moravians also counseled Wesley on his personal salvation.

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[28] Ibid.

Wesley spent the majority of his time in Georgia ministering to the Indians, which he described in his letters as shaky. After several months, however, a small religious society did form by Robert Hows. The design of the group involved reading, praying, singing psalms, and meeting on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday nights. Another positive aspect that came from Wesley's trip to Georgia was the development of several Methodist practices. One involved opposition to inhuman treatment such as slavery. Also, Wesley learned German, French and Spanish, which helped him to minister to the different groups in Savannah. Another positive aspect was the publication of Wesley's *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns* in 1737, which was the first English hymnbook published in America. The publication expressed the heart of pietism and was grounded in Scripture and other themes that were central to Wesley's spiritual quest for dependency upon grace and the centrality of God's love.

The most compelling positive aspect that came about from the mission to Georgia was John Wesley's overwhelming success among Black slaves. Wesley had noticed their lack of understanding of basic Christianity, and while in Augusta he taught them the Gospel as well as ministered to the youth. Upon leaving Georgia, he left them a proposed program of itinerant instruction for spreading the Gospel among them. This plan was to search out those who were serious about the Gospel among the planters, and those of them who could best understand English were to go from plantation to plantation, staying as long as was necessary to teach the Gospel.

John Wesley left Georgia with some disappointments as well, but he left with the central teachings of the Moravians "heart theology." He took this imagery with him back to Oxford, and there he found his brother, Charles Wesley, along with George Whitfield

and others busy in evangelism. Whitfield among others had begun preaching a zealous evangelical gospel among the religious societies in London. While John Wesley was gone, Whitfield experienced a spiritual awakening that spread among their other colleagues as well, and throughout England evangelical movements had begun. His friends were in a sense itinerant preachers who where going from place to place preaching the gospel.

John Wesley and fellow friends soon began a group called the Fetter Lane Society, which John Wesley would later call the third rise of Methodism. Their chief goal was the spiritual health of the group. Peter Bohler was key in organizing the group. He was a Lutheran minister who tutored Wesley on his lack of assurance of faith and his lack of unbelief, which became crucial in Wesley's understanding of salvation by faith alone. Bohler left London for the New World and shortly thereafter many of John Wesley's colleagues, along with his brother Charles Wesley, became convinced of the Moravian perspectives. The assurance of faith came to Charles Wesley while sick on his bed, where he said he felt "a strange palpitation of heart," and was able to say, "I believe, I believe!" There he found himself at peace with God (CWJ, 1:146-47).

This occurrence disturbed John Wesley because he wanted to experience the power of the Holy Spirit for himself. Yet, within three days he did experience the Holy Spirit for himself while listening to Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans at a society at Aldersgate Street. He heard from Luther's preface about the change that takes place within a person's heart at the work of God. There Wesley felt his heart strangely warmed, and he celebrated as he told people about his experience. This propelled Wesley to preach the message of salvation by faith alone.

Wesley still struggled theologically with certain aspects of Moravian thinking, yet he continued preaching his newfound faith. Soon, the societies moved from their rooms into the streets and fields. Whitfield preached to thousands in the streets. His preaching was called "Open-Air Preaching." Whitfield's pattern of preaching helped shape Wesley's thinking to see the world as his parish and his role within the church as being to spread the good news of salvation.[29]

The Rise of Itinerant Preaching and the Circuit System

Because of the spread of Methodism throughout several parts of England, there were not enough ordained clergymen to be appointed over each society. Laymen were brought into service to be full-time itinerant lay preachers. John Wesley believed in having an ordained clergy person in all societies, rather than having a layperson in charge. He did, however, appoint lay preachers to assist those sent to a specific circuit. A circuit was the area to which an assistant was sent to assist in visiting and overseeing the bands and the classes, hold quarterly meetings of all the societies, and care for the helpers sent to each church or circuit. Assistants became known as superintendents after John Wesley's death.

These assistant had delegated authority but were also itinerants who traveled regularly within their own circuit, with long absences from home consisting of several one-night sojourns going from one society to the next. At the request of John Wesley these assistant would have to go to new circuits every year or at least every two years. This method was to prevent their sermons from going stale or repetitive.

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[29] Ibid.

John Wesley experimented with a circuit-preaching plan for the London Circuit to cover the months of October 1786 to January 1787. These preaching plans developed slowly because of Wesley's attention to the property acquisition that was rapidly increasing. The constant travels of Wesley and others consisted of spreading the gospel of salvation as well as organizing new societies. Their stay within the different areas was often short because of the constant growth of the movement and the rate in which new societies were forming. The itinerant preachers were sent to preach the gospel and see to the temporal affairs of each society while developing leaders within each new society to care for the affairs of that society while they were absent.

The Itinerant System: Predominantly African American Methodist Churches

In November, 1787, the Blacks belonging to the Methodist Society in Philadelphia convened together to take into consideration the oppression under which they labored, arising from the unkind treatment of their white brethren, who considered them a nuisance in the house of worship, and even pulled them off their knees while praying and ordered them back to their seats. For these and other various acts of oppressive conduct, the Black Methodists in Philadelphia decided to devise a plan to build their own place of worship.

During this undertaking the Black Methodists came up against much opposition and it was not until 1793 that the first African Methodist meetinghouse was started under the direction of Richard Allen. This African Methodist group is known today as the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Francis Asbury, then Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, opened the new meetinghouse for worship, and it was named Bethel.

In 1796, a similar story began for other African Methodists who were at the John Street Methodist Church in New York City. It was not until 1800 that a church called Zion was built for these African Methodists who decided to develop their own place of worship. Bishop Francis Asbury also opened this meetinghouse for worship services and the Methodist Episcopal Church sent their ministers to them for the first twenty years. This African Methodist group is known today as the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Out of this same area came another African Methodist group called the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, which was organized in December of 1870, in Jackson, Tennessee.

Theological Foundation

John Wesley was a critical thinker who read widely and had various interests, and the scope of his intellectual curiosity was as broad as the field of learning of the century he lived.[30] The books that Wesley read covered the fields of geography, history, statecraft, science, medicine, classical literature, oratory, biography, poetry, fiction, philosophy, ethics, and religion. Salvation was the quest of John Wesley's life, and all his thinking centered around this single goal.[31] His quest for salvation was demonstrated in his movement and struggles in life, and was also evident in his thinking and development.

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[30] For a list of the books read and noticed by John Wesley in his *Journal*, see the Everyman's Library edition of the *Journal*, Index, IV, 550-55

[31] Herpert Davis, *Poetical Works* vols. 5 and 9 (London, NY: Oxford University Press, 1966), 3, 466.

The Theological Position of the Call On John Wesley's Life

The call for John Wesley began at the Epworth rectory. His mother and father were both devoted to the Lord. Wesley's mother, Susanna, led the way in the education of her children, teaching them languages at an early age. She spent an hour in the evening with each of her five children. Susanna is best known for her hard approach, for she believed that in order to form the minds of children, the first thing to be done is to conquer their will and bring them to an obedient posture. Samuel Wesley, John Wesley's father, was a parish pastor who had an influence on John as well through his weekly sermons. Samuel tried to set up a small society of a circle of friends that would contain praying to God, reading the Holy Scriptures and discourse about religious matters, and speaking about how to edify their neighbors. This society influenced John and sparked his interest in focusing on a spiritual quest of his own. His call, therefore, was largely influenced by his family life and by his desire to pursue the burning spiritual quest that captured him.

John Wesley began to understand his call more as he went through the education process and received mentoring from leaders in different faith traditions. The call for him involved living a disciplined Christian life in pursuit of holiness and obedience to God. This continuous pursuit of piety and holy living was the foundation of John Wesley's calling, and his whole ministry was established and set forth by teaching and encouraging others in this same manner. His call seemed to be a gradual call that was influenced by family, school, scholars, theologians, philosophies, the doctrine of the Church of England

and every day life experiences. Many of Wesley's theological foundations were not his own, but were greatly influenced by others or were doctrines inherited by others. Despite these other influences, Wesley understood that it was God that called him to be God's servant and preacher of the gospel.

The Preaching Theology of John Wesley

John Wesley understood theology to be intimately related to Christian living and the proclamation of Christian faith.[32] Theology is actualized in authentic living and true proclamation. Thomas Langford suggests that Wesley had little interest in theology for its own sake, but thought its purpose should be for transforming personal life and social relations. Langford further suggests that Wesley thought the purpose of theology was not so much for understanding life as for changing life—that theology should help effect the love of God and neighbor.

Wesley's theology was developed over time and through his personal experiences and his mission. Furthermore, his theology evolved out of his natural way of approaching theological issues. The majority of his writings were theological abstracts in defense of his preaching, and his sermons represented his theological method and positions. In addition, as Thomas Langford added, Wesley's sermons were a dynamic interaction between speaking the message and life-changing reception of the message.

John Wesley understood that the Gospel itself is plain, but the context in which the people are who hear the message is complex. Ernst Fusch suggests that a preacher must have a theologically sound conception of the listener's world before he or she can

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[32] Randy L. Maddox, *Rethinking Wesley's Theology for Contemporary Methodism* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1998), 35.

address it.[33] This was understood in Wesley's plain and simple approach to proclaiming the gospel message. His approach to preaching was practical, which attempted to make it easy to proclaim a clear message that expressed God's grace.

In his theology, Wesley faithfully kept the foundation of orthodox teachings about God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, the created and fallen nature of human beings, justification by grace through faith, and the means of grace. Wesley inherited the doctrinal heritage of the Church of England, yet, he was sensitive towards those to whom he preached. In this manner, he was clear, concise and confident about what to preach and how to preach it.

According to Thomas Langford, Wesley's central questions were: what must people hear? And how are they able to hear the gospel? In answering the first question, he returned to the traditional theology by which he was formed. In answering the second question, he developed an awareness of the intellectual, social, and moral ethos in which the people to whom he preached lived. His astonishing success was in large part due to the balance that Wesley achieved in his sensitivity to both dimensions.

John Wesley believed that God's mode of relating to human beings was through Jesus Christ, who called people to repentance and to respond in faith to the grace that is free to all and for all. Free grace was a primary emphasis for Wesley, as was human freedom.

John Wesley's Theological Position as a Preacher

John Wesley was adamant about his preaching and took the task of preaching seriously. His theological position as a preacher was three-fold. First, he preached as a

[33] Ernst Fuchs, *Hermeneutik* (Tubingen, Mohr, 1970), 99.

call to repentance. Secondly, he preached the grace of God, and thirdly he preached salvation by faith.

Wesley believed that humanity's inability to be totally obedient to God was due to their pride and self-will, which was very evident in Wesley's view of Satan. "He freely yielded to the temptation, and gave way first to pride, then to self-will."[34] Wesley attributed the Fall to Lucifer, believing that evil emerged from the context of goodness and the perversion of freedom.

Kenneth Collins writes that John Wesley believed in the prevenient grace of God and the convincing grace of God that led to an initial repentance of man. Collins further writes that since humanity inevitably commits sin, prevenient grace works with what Wesley calls convincing grace, in which a more active role is taken by the Holy Spirit in convicting men and women of their guilt in the sight of a holy God.[35] Wesley believed that the Holy Spirit must take a vital role in leading to repentance, because sin dulls and possibly eliminates the spiritual senses so that sinners are hardly aware of their true spiritual conditions. Moreover, they are in a stupor or a daze because of the opiates of sin.

It seems that in Wesley's sermons "Awake, Thou That Sleepest" and "The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption," he is concerned with waking up sinners who are not aware of their rebellion towards God. Wesley persisted in preaching the Word of God for the purpose of leading people to repentance, for he viewed his field preaching as an attempt to "shake Satan's kingdom."[36] His seriousness in preaching was an attempt to preach in

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[34] Albert Outler, *Sermons* vol. 2 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 476.

[35] Kerry Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 48.

[36] Reginald Ward and Richard Heitzenrater, *Journal and Diaries* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press), 479.

such a way that sinners would become conscious of God's love and become convicted to repent. Wesley believed that conviction of sin leads to repentance, in which humbled sinners acknowledge that they have fallen short of the glory of God and are strengthen by a firm resolve to alter their way of life.

Wesley's thinking differed from other Protestant thinking in that he considered repentance to be two sorts. He described one sort as legal repentance, which is a conviction of sin at the beginning of one's spiritual journey; the occurrence of a freshly awakened sinner who is moved by the Holy Spirit. Wesley says, "Legal repentance is the very first motion of the soul towards God,"[37] The second sort was described as evangelical repentance, which involves a change of heart and deals with inbred sin and the life of holiness for those more spiritually mature.

John Wesley portrayed the grace of God basically as divine "favor" or "approval." His sermon "Salvation by Faith," spoke of the "good pleasure" and the "mere favor" of the Most High.[38] Grace demonstrates the generosity and goodness of God. Collins adds to this thought of grace by suggesting that God is never in our debt because of anything we have done. All of our obedience is already owed, and there is nothing "extra" to offer up that could possibly obligate the Most High God.[39]

God's blessing upon man is free and undeserving. Grace is both rich and freely given. Wesley describes the favor of God in this manner shortly after his Aldersgate experience in his sermon "The Witness of Our Own Spirit." In it he describes two kinds of grace:

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[37] John Wesley, *NT Notes, Acts 20:21 and Matthew 4:17; 5:3* (New York, NY: Baker)

[38] Albert *Sermons,* vol. 1 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 126.

[39] Kenneth Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 101.

> 'By the grace of God' is sometimes to be understood that free love, that unmerited mercy, by which I, a sinner through merits of Christ am now reconciled to God. But in this place it rather means that power of God the Holy Ghost, which "worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure". As soon as ever the grace of God (in the former sense, his pardoning love) is manifested to our soul, the grace of God (in the latter sense, the power of the Spirit) takes place therein. And now we can perform, through God, what to man was impossible.[40]

Wesley saw grace as the liberating power from the dominion of sin, which is the power of the Holy Spirit. Grace becomes the power behind the change of one's soul, which leads sinners to the acceptance of Christ and to obedience to Him. Wesley believed that such a power that causes deep transformation in persons must be "the gift and work of God." The gift and work of God also led persons to have faith in God.

John Wesley believes that there is a readiness to faith that allows one to receive Jesus Christ into his or her life and to allow Christ to work within him or her. This faith in Jesus is what allows man to have salvation. In his sermon "An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," Wesley stresses his ideas of faith:

> "Faith is the gift of God," No man is able to work it in himself. It is a work of omnipotence. It requires no less power thus to quicken a dead soul, than to raise a body that lies in the grave. It is a new creation…it is the free gift of God, which he bestows, not on those who are worthy of his favour, not on such as previously holy, and so fit to be crowned with all the blessings of his goodness; but on the ungodly and unholy; on those who till that hour were fit only for ever-lasting destruction; those in whom there was no good thing, and whose only plea was, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" No merit, no goodness in man precedes the forgiving love of God. His pardoning mercy supposes nothing in us but a sense of mere sin and misery; and to all who see, and feel, and their wants, and

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[40] Outler, *Sermons,* vol. 1, 309.

> their utter inability to remove them, God freely gives faith, for the sake of Him in whom he is always "well pleased."[41]

Faith is a personal reliance upon Christ, which Wesley believed allowed Christ to work in the lives of believers. Faith for Wesley requires the opening of the believer's life to the work of God. This is why he preached so often and so much to help bring about a change in the lives of people.

Wesley's theological position as a preacher was to help bring awareness to the sinner of their rebellion towards God, so that they may repent and experience God's saving grace. God's grace is experienced as they receive the gift of faith to believe in Jesus Christ and allow God's power to work in and through them.

John Wesley's Theological Position as Pastor

John Wesley never seemed to view himself as a pastor in the sense of parish ministry. He was reluctant to take over as the parish minister of his father's church in Epworth. He conceded to become the parish minister at the request of his dying father, but his parish ministry lasted only a few months because he felt his call extended beyond the parish itself.

As a pastor, Wesley's concentration was on preaching and spreading the good news of God and assisting in the development of groups of people who committed to a disciplined life of prayer, reading the Scriptures and edifying each other. Wesley oversaw the personal spiritual development of people both at close range and long range. He would for a time have direct involvement in the spiritual development of the people, but

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[41] Herpert Davis, *Poetical Works* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), vol. 8, 5-6.

after a short while he would position someone else to tend to the group's individual spiritual growth.

This gave Wesley the opportunity to continue preaching and spreading the Gospel. In his absence another spiritually mature person cared for the needs of the organized societies, but Wesley continued to oversee their development. He was very good at setting up societies in new communities and giving direction and guidance for the societies' development. Wesley's theological position for himself as a pastor, therefore, was more in line with that of the bishops and overseers as recorded and practiced within the New Testament. He viewed his ministry as reaching far beyond the local parish to providing spiritual guidance for the other societies as well as creating new ones by preaching the Gospel throughout the land and winning new converts.

Viewing his pastoral responsibilities from a much broader perspective, Wesley understood his pastoral role in highly evangelistic terms. In a letter written to a close friend, he addressed a charge that claimed he should settle into a collegiate or parish and stop invading other clergymen's parishes by circulating around the various religious societies in Oxford and London. Wesley responded by saying, "I look upon the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that, in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear the glad tidings of salvation."[42]

Biblical Foundation

The movement of God's servants from one place to another is an aspect that is readily apparent in the Old Testament. The prophets Elijah and Elisha, for instance, were two prophets among many who moved from place to place as directed by God. They

[42] John Wesley, *Letter*, vol. 25 (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915), 616.

were nomads. In many respects Elijah and Elisha were homeless messengers of God wandered from region to region fulfilling God's purpose and plan for His people.

God communicated His word to His people through the prophets. Prophets were also called "seers," or "men of God." The word "prophet" itself seems to carry the meaning of being "called." God takes the initiative in calling the prophet by selecting, summoning, and sending the prophet. The prophet is then faced with the challenge of responding to God's call—a call which requires them to go where God is sending them to do what God requires. The prophet's movement from one place to another, therefore, is central to the call. God says in Jer. 7:25, "From the time your forefathers left Egypt until now, day after day, again and again I sent you my servants the prophets."

The term "Man of God," often used to refer to a prophet speaks of the relationship that is established between the prophet and God once the prophet responds to God's call. The prophet becomes "God's man" and is recognized as belonging to him. The term "Seer" indicates the new and remarkable powers of perception granted to the prophet. In Hebrew, as in English, the ordinary verb "to see" is used to speak of understanding ("I see what you mean") and of the power of perception ("He sees things very clearly"). In the case of the prophets, their powers of "perception" were raised far above normal as the Lord inspired them to become vehicles of his message. God's prophets not only had the power of God upon them, but God required movement from them.[43]

In 1 Kgs. 17:3, God requires Elijah to leave. God says, "Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan." The movement of the prophets and the length of their stay in any particular region were based on the command of God. Often

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[43] W. A. Elwell and P. W. Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001), 1085.

times the length of the prophet's stay is not spelled out in Scripture. In the instance of Elijah at Cherith and Zarephath, however, C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch suggest that according to 1 Kgs. 18:1, Elijah's sojourn lasted at least two years.[44]

Kurt Niederwimmer points out that according to the *Didache,* one criterion used to test a prophet's authenticity was the length of the prophet's stay in an area. In addition, this requirement to move about was a factor that the apostles in the *Didache* also experienced—a sense of radical homelessness. Often times, prophets did not appear to be ongoing or even temporarily residents in the communities to which they were sent. Instead, the life of a prophet was an itinerancy.[45]

The movements of the prophets were at the command of God. Elijah did not move until God said in 1 Kgs. 17:9, "Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there." Once in Zarephath of Sidon, Elijah stayed until another command of God required him to move in 1 Kgs. 18:1-2, "After a long time, in the third year, the word of the Lord came to Elijah: 'Go and present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land.' So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab." God's assignments for Elijah moved him from Beersheba to the Desert of Damascus, to Samaria, to Gilgal, to Bethel, to Jericho and finally to Jordan. Once Elijah handed the prophetic mantle over to Elisha, Elisha continued the ministry from place to place as God instructed. Elisha traveled from Jericho to Bethel, from Bethel to Mount Carmel, and then he traveled until he reached Samaria.

Kurt Niederwimmer suggests that prophets often sought provisional lodging for only one day at a time, in order to move on. An example of this can be found in reference

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[44] C. F. Keil, and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* vol. 3, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson). 167.

[45] Kurt Niederwimmer, *A Commentary of the Didache.* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press), 176.

to Elisha in 2 Kgs. 4:10, "Let's make a small room on the roof and put in it a bed and a table, a chair and a lamp for him. Then he can stay there whenever he comes to us." In this regard, Niederwimmer also notes what was taught in the *Didache* (11:5), "He shall stay only one day, or, if need be, another day too. If he stays three days, he is a false prophet."[46] Also, according to the *Didache*, prophets/apostles were to be received as the Lord (11:4). Then, when the prophets/apostles left an area, they were to receive nothing but enough bread to see them through until they found lodging again, and if they asked for money, they were considered a false prophet (11:6).

Another part of Scripture in which the movement of God's servants is readily apparent is in the New Testament, as it shows the development and history of the early Church. The New Testament reveals the transition of the early Church—its movement, its growth, and how Christianity spread from region to region as those called by God carried the message of Jesus Christ forth into the world. Christianity spread because the focus of the early Church did not rest on one particular area, but its purpose was to proclaim the Kingdom of God on earth. Examining the mission and work of Jesus, his disciples and the Apostle Paul in particular show how their movement was critical in fulfilling the plan and purpose of God.

The Gospel of Mark describes the life and activities of Jesus at a fast pace. Mark writes in a way that shows Jesus on the move. Jesus travels from place to place and his stay at certain places and with people is short term. Two of the major activities in which Jesus engaged to fulfill his mission, preaching the Kingdom of God and evangelizing from town to town, thrived on his movement:

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[46] Ibid.

> Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else – to the nearby villages – so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons (Mark 1:35-39, NIV).

Mark demonstrates within these few verses what Jesus deems to be his primary task, which is to preach throughout the land. Jesus says in Mk. 1:38, "That is why I have come." William Lane commented on this verse by suggesting that Jesus' purpose is not to heal as many people as possible as a manifestation of the Kingdom of God, but to confront men with the decision to respond to God's absolute claim upon their person.[47] David Garland adds that Jesus is not interested in the fleeing adulation of crowds and refuses to go back to Capernaum because he is to go to preach to all Israel.[48]

Jesus' reply to his disciples in verse 38 describes an itinerant preaching ministry. Jesus says, "let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also." This suggests that Jesus left Capernaum to carry his preaching mission elsewhere in Galilee and to proclaim the word over an extended area. Garland suggests that for Jesus, the Good News could not be static; Jesus kept his bags packed, traveling from here to there, and would not be distracted from his purpose.[49]

Kenneth Wuest suggests that Jesus' words "Let us go," depict continuous movement in Jesus' itinerant preaching ministry. He writes that the word "go," is the

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[47] William Lane, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1974), 82.

[48] David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 74.

[49] Ibid.

Greek word *αγωμεν,* (present, hortatory subjunctive) which means let us be going, and keep on going, emphasizing the length and arduousness of the contemplated preaching mission.[50]

Gerd Thessien presents the view that the Jesus movement was a Palestinian "renewal movement" that was made up of charismatics who left their villages, homes, families, relativies, wealth, and safety to pursue a wandering radical lifestyle of voluntary poverty. These wanderers were supported from time to time by local sympathizers in the Galilean villages.[51]

The preaching itinerant ministry of Jesus was instilled into his disciples as well. Jesus sent his apostles throughout Israel to preach the Kingdom of God and spread the Good News. This following passage in Matthew gives an example of Jesus extending his mission to the disciples, so that they too may join in fulfilling the purpose of God in the earth—a plan that very much required their movement:

> He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any towns of the Samaritians. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, preach this message: "The kingdom of heaven is near" (Matthew 10:1-7, NIV).

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[50] Kenneth Wuest, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament* vol.1. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974), 38.

[51] Gerd Thessien *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press), 31-95.

Jesus summoned his twelve disciples together and gave them authority for the missionary task. He was the sole source of the disciple's authority and power to fulfill the task for which they were chosen. He empowered them for their missionary journey and gave them instructions on where to go and to what people to go. Jesus emphasized to the disciples to go first to the Jews, who he referred to as the lost sheep of Israel. Although Jesus restricted the disciples' travel to Israel during this particular journey, there was a purpose in him doing so. Dale Allison suggests that the reason for disregarding the Samaritans and Gentiles was not an act of prejudice, but stemmed from the immediate needs of God's people, Israel.[52] Later the disciples would be sent beyond Israel to spread the Gospel throughout the world.

In addition to the example of Jesus and the disciples, the ministry of the Apostle Paul provides another example of the itinerant preaching ministry in the New Testament. His particular call and assignment was to spread the Gospel among the Gentiles. His itinerant preaching ministry extended from Jerusalem to Cyprus, to Asia Minor (modern Turkey), to the provinces of Galatia. In Galatia, he preached the gospel and planted churches in the cities of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. Paul also ministered in Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Macedonia, Achaia, Athens, and Corinth. His movement from place to place was extensive, as he embraced his mission to preach the gospel and evangelize territories where the gospel had never been heard before, having no desire to "build on another man's foundation" (Rom. 15:20).

> I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of

[52] Dale Allison and W.D. Davies, *The International Critical Commentary: Matthew* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T &T Clark, 1998), 167.

> God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have done by the power of sign and miracles, through the power of the Spirit, so from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. It has been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. (Rom. 15:15-20)

One scholar, Ronald Hock, suggests that Paul traveled nearly ten thousand miles during his reported career, which put him on roads busy with "government officials, traders, pilgrims, the sick, letter-carriers, sighteers, runaway slaves, fugitives, prisoners, athletes, artisans, teachers, and student."[53] The geographical spectrum Paul speaks of in verse nineteen reveals in some part the areas that Paul's itinerant preaching ministry had taken him. Paul says, "From Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ." The word around speaks of distance and travel. Douglas Moo suggests that Paul's use of the word "around" indicates that the journey he described was not a direct one, but that he moved "around," "in a circuitous route" as he made his way from Jerusalem to Illyricum.[54]

Paul went to areas of the world that had not heard the gospel. Paul believed that God had given him the ministry to strategically establish churches in virgin gospel territory. He was a true evangelist at heart and his intent was to spread the gospel anywhere he could to reach as many as possible.

The example of the prophets in the Old Testament, as well as the examples of Jesus, his disciples, and the Apostle Paul in the New Testament provide the Scriptural

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[53] Ronald Hock, *Paul's Tentmaking and the Problem of His Social Class* vol. 97 (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1980), 555-64.

[54] Douglas Moo, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 895.

model for itinerate ministry for all who have accepted Christ's call to continue his work of salvation in the world. Jesus has given his followers the command to go and tell the world about him, teaching them to obey everything that he has taught. Matthew's Gospel records this Great Commission as saying:

> Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you (Mt. 28:18-20, NIV).

The command from Jesus to his followers is simply to go. The use of "go" in this passage has no specific location attached to it, nor does it have any sense of ceasing. What it does have, however, is the sense of movement and action to do something of importance, and the action that is undertaken is to extend to the whole world. This commandment to go is the Church's primary reason for evangelism and mission.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

The Methodist system has at the core of its design ministers who are itinerant pastors. Ministers in the A. M. E. Zion church are not "called" by a local church body, nor are they "selected" by the church's lay leadership. In the A. M. E. Zion Church the resident bishop, who acts on behalf of the whole church and is empowered to make and fix all appointments in the Episcopal area of which the annual conference is a part, appoints ministers. Moreover, these itinerant ministers appointed by the bishop receive appointments annually. Every minister who is appointed to a local church is assigned only for one year at a time. Usually, the pastor's term of service at the church lasts for a number of years, as he or she is reassigned to the same church year after year. Often, however, due to the traveling nature of the system, many pastors are moved from one church to another after only a short time serving a particular congregation.

Reverend Christopher L. Zacharias is a prime example of a minister whose pastoral tenures have been tremendously impacted by the transitional nature of the itinerate system. As an itinerant pastor within the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, he has been in the itinerancy for seven years, and within those seven years, he had pastored four different churches. All four of his pastorates have been short term assignments. Although in all instances Rev. Zacharias was assigned from one church to

another as a ministry promotion, the challenge of having to immerse himself into one new congregation after another and connect with the membership in order to position himself for effective ministry remained a difficult task.

Being a situation that all ministers in a new pastorate have to face, the challenge of establishing a connection with a new congregation is a ministry situation that is worthy of examination, and is therefore, the focus of this doctoral project. Because pastors in itinerate systems are particularly susceptible to being moved into new ministry contexts and are therefore, likely to experience multiple instances of having to establish a connection with a new congregation, this project addresses this issue as it relates to various itinerate ministry traditions.

The Purpose of the Project

Using qualitative methods, the purpose of this project is to explore and gain insight from the ministry experience of the writer of this doctoral project as well as from the ministry experiences of other itinerate pastors as they have undertaken the process of establishing a connection with their new congregations. In this project, the writer documents his experiences with new pastorates and the process that he used to establish a connection with the new congregations to which he was assigned during his ministry. Then he gathers insights from other itinerate pastors regarding their attempts at establishing a connection with their new congregations, and he highlights the lessons learned from these experiences. The writer's hope in providing these insights is that they will help ministers in new pastorate situations to address the challenge of establishing a connection with their new congregations. Gaining insight from other pastors who have

been faced with the issue will hopefully provide a starting place for ministers in new pastorates to develop their own process for making a healthy pastoral connection.

The Design of the Project

The design of the project is qualitative in nature with an exploratory approach. For part of the project, the insights sought were gained from the experiences that the writer documented regarding the process he used to connect with the various congregations that he pastored. By thinking through and documenting his own process, the writer was able to highlight aspects that may be helpful to other ministers in new pastorates. For the other part of the project, the insights sought were gained by conducting personal interviews and questionnaires/surveys of itinerant pastors within the following Methodist denominations: A. M. E., A. M. E.Z., C.M.E., and U.M. The pastors who contributed to the data that was gathered have either been in a new pastorate under three years or are beginning their first pastoral assignment.

There were three primary issues that the researcher sought to address and gain insight into during this investigation. Both by documenting his own experiences at the churches where he began a new pastorate and by collecting data from other itinerate pastors, the researcher sought to fulfill the following three learning objectives: (1) To investigate and identify what are some of the factors that can hinder the establishment of a healthy pew/pulpit connection; (2) To investigate and identify what are some of the factors specifically within the Methodist itinerate church system that may hinder the establishment of a healthy pew/pulpit connection; and (3) To gain insight into the process

and methods used to begin connecting with a congregation in the beginning of a new pastorate.

The Planning, Research, and Evaluation of the Project

The researcher primarily used qualitative research methodologies to gain the insights needed for this project. To effectively collect, interpret and evaluate the data, the researcher performed the following specific activities:

1. The researcher kept a detailed log of all observations made and insights gained during the process of the project's investigation.
2. The researcher implemented the project using the appropriate research methodology. As qualitative research best fit the type of investigation that this project sought to do, the researcher developed questionnaires and descriptive surveys that helped to gain the data that was interpreted for the findings of this project.
3. The researcher evaluated the responses gathered and analyzed the data collected by carefully comparing the responses provided on the questionnaires and during the interviews to draw out major themes that spoke to the heart of the subject matter. From the analyzed data, the researcher then drew his insights and relevant conclusions.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE: THE JOURNEY

In the first part of this chapter, the researcher documents his experiences of trying to establish a connection with the new congregations to which he was sent during the course of his ministry. From these experiences he draws out lessons learned that could provide insight for other pastors faced with new pastorate situations. Then, the researcher concludes the chapter by providing the insights gained from other itinerate pastors during the interviews and from the surveys.

Insight Learned From Mt. Pisgah A. M. E. Zion Church

Only six months after giving his trial sermon, the researcher, Christopher Zacharias, was appointed by the Bishop to pastor his first church. The church, Mt. Pisgah A.M.E. Zion Church, was located in a rural area of Bedford, Pennsylvania. Mt. Pisgah was a small church of about twenty-five members. Bedford, where the church was located was a two and a half hours drive from Sewickley where Christopher lived, one way. Upon his arrival, Christopher could see that the church was in need of a servant leader who would love and care for the people. Being located so far away from Pittsburgh, where the majority of the A.M.E. Zion churches in that conference were located, the members of Mt. Pisgah were in some ways disconnected from the larger church conference. They did not receive often enough the joy of fellowshipping with

their sister churches in the conference. Furthermore, many of the members did not understand the practice and traditions of the A. M. E. Zion Church, mainly because they were not taught them. So, when changes were set in place that affected the church, especially when they were sent a new pastor, they were forced to adjust with little understanding as to why the changes were made. These factors created a challenge for Christopher in attempting to connect with this congregation, because he had to overcome the larger disconnect that already existed between the church and the larger conference.

Another factor that added to the challenge of connecting with the Mt. Pisgah congregation was the fact that Christopher was sent there as a 26 year old new minister only six months into the ministry—with no formal ministry training, no formal theological education, and uncertain about being sent there to be their pastor. Although he was sent there as a supply pastor, Christopher had no idea how long he would have to stay at Mt. Pisgah. Even more, he had no idea of where to begin in providing leadership for this small, disconnected, yet loving congregation. Christopher, therefore, had to learn as he went along.

One of the things Christopher learned right away was that in a new pastorate situation, a great way to make a connection with the congregation involves creating a space where both are willing to learn and grow together. Christopher knew he was young and inexperienced, as did the congregation, so he was very intentional about soliciting their input and hearing their concerns. He tried to create a place where he and the members helped each other meet the needs of the congregation. It was not long before the members of Mt. Pisgah began to see that although Christopher was not an experienced

minister, he did not pretend to know it all, but instead showed a genuine interest in learning and growing with them.

One of the greatest benefits of Christopher beginning his pastoral relationship with Mt. Pisgah in this way is that he established a safe place for him to grow as a pastor and as a man. As his pastoral identity was being formed, his experience at Mt. Pisgah gave him a place to begin to discover his strengths and weaknesses, test his pastoral skills and learn from his mistakes.

Insights Learned From St. Paul A. M. E. Zion Church

Christopher's time spent with the Mt. Pisgah congregation allowed him to get his feet wet and gain some much needed pastoral experience while trying to make a lasting impact on its members, but it only lasted for one year. After a year at Mt. Pisgah, Christopher was sent to St. Paul A. M. E. Zion church, located in the Coraopolis suburb of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. St. Paul was a church of approximately seventy-five members, and many of the members were related to each other. Being a family church with a long standing presence in the Coraopolis community, the church's history was rich with faithful members and pastors that experienced long tenures. During the five years prior to Christopher being sent to St. Paul (1994-1999), however, the church had been sent two different pastors who had short term assignments. Experiencing such a rapid change was something that St. Paul was not accustomed to, and being sent to them after two short pastorates created a challenge for Christopher to overcome.

Christopher came into this new assignment at St. Paul on the heels of an exodus from his predecessor, who was promoted to another nearby church. Although the church

seemed to be doing well, it did not take long for Christopher to realize that many in the church were grieved by the loss of three pastors in such a short time. After the death of their great long-standing pastor of thirty plus years, a young vibrant pastor was sent to them who immediately connected with the church and rejuvenate life back into the church. The arrival of this young pastor sparked immediate growth, and many of the members were looking forward to a long relationship with their new pastor. About a year and a half later, however, this pastor was reassigned to a different church out of the state.

The unexpected movement in the middle of the conference year of their young pastor whom the members grew to love was devastating to many at St. Paul, and many became angry with the bishop and the itinerate system for moving their pastor. The pastor that followed, therefore, had to endure the congregation's anger, attempt to build a connection with the members who were not expecting to have to embrace a new pastor. The new pastor's first few months were difficult because of the lack of cooperation from the congregation. Eventually their anger wore down, but was not forgotten. Then, after another short tenure, this pastor was reassigned to a different church, and Christopher was sent to St. Paul.

By the time Christopher was assigned to St. Paul, the movement of pastors to and from the church had made some members very reluctant to embrace new leadership, primarily because there was no assurance for them that the new pastor was going to be around for a reasonable timeframe. This created some challenges that Christopher had to overcome in connecting with the congregation, but Christopher had to his advantage that he grew up in a town near Coraopolis, and he therefore, knew many of St. Paul's members.

Because of the disappointment that many of the members felt due to their consistent change in pastors, Christopher knew that he had to find some way to show his concern and care for them. Being a family church that sought to care for and support one another, Christopher realized that caring for the sick and hurting among them was a large concern for the members of St. Paul. This is where he focused a lot of his attention, and his pastoral care efforts allowed the members to see and experience his genuine love and concern. This, of course, played a large part in his establishing a connection with the members.

A factor that contributed greatly to Christopher's ability to connect with the congregation of St. Paul, which was different than his pastorate at Mt. Pisgah, was that he lived in close proximity to the church. Mt. Pisgah was a two and a half hour long commute from where Christopher lived, but he lived only minutes from St. Paul. This gave him the ability to spend much more time at the church doing ministry throughout the week and to respond to the members' pastoral needs. By living in the area, Christopher was able to become a part of the community and was involved with the schools, hospitals, and other local organizations. By doing these things, Christopher made a healthy connection with the St. Paul congregation that fostered a sense of unity and trust between the pew and pulpit. Under his leadership the congregation grew in spiritual fervor and in number, grew in its outreach to the community, and became more financially secure.

Although Christopher was experiencing a very rewarding pastorate at St. Paul, two and a half years into the pastorate he was promoted again and assigned to a new church. It was a difficult experience for both the church and the writer because a great

bond had developed between them. It was at this point that Christopher really experienced the straining impact that the itinerate system can have both on churches and on the pastors who are assigned to them. Although the church was doing well, Christopher's pastoral relationship with the church ended, not because either of them felt it necessary, but because of the system. The bishop decided that it was time for Christopher to move to another church—not him, and not the church. It became apparent therefore, that in some instances, the itinerate system not only contributes to the difficulty in establishing a connection between the pew and pulpit in a new pastorate, but it also contributes to the difficulty in maintaining that connection.

Insights Learned From St. Mark A. M. E. Zion Church

Although it was difficult to leave St. Paul, Christopher was excited about the potential ministry that could be done at his next assignment, particularly because the church was situated in an urban setting and Christopher had not yet engaged in urban ministry. This third pastoral assignment was St. Mark A. M. E. Zion church. St Mark is located in the Wilkinsburg community about two miles outside of the Pittsburgh city limits. The church membership consisted of ninety members, and like St. Paul, St. Mark was a family church in which many of the members were related to each other. Most of the members were blue-collar workers and residents of a different town—Lawrenceville, Pennsylvania. Less than 2% of the members were residents of Wilkinsburg, primarily because at one time St. Mark had been located in Lawrenceville, and later relocated to Wilkinsburg.

Establishing a connection with the members of St. Mark proved to be a challenge for Christopher for a number of reasons. One reason was that the leadership style of the previous pastor at St. Mark was dictatorial, and the members seemed to have grown accustomed to functioning, or more accurately, not functioning, according to his style of leadership. Because the former pastor tended to have a top-down approach to ministry and rarely sought the input of the membership in making ministry decisions, many in the congregation withdrew and few were involved in the ministry life of the church. Many in the church were so used to being told what to do that Christopher's leadership style, which tends to be much more engaging, took a while to draw them back into the life of the church.

Another factor that created a challenge to connection with the St. Mark congregation for Christopher involved conflicts between the primary families of the church. There were three families in particular that had a large presence in the membership of St. Mark, and members from all three families held various leadership positions in the church. The former pastor, however, tended to have a closer relationship with one of the families and tended to use members of that family in ministry considerably more than the others. When Christopher joined St. Mark, it seemed as though the three major families were competing with one another and were waiting to see to which of the families Christopher was going to establish the closest relationship. Because of the sensitivity of the issue, therefore, Christopher felt as though he had to be careful not to give any one family more of his attention or utilize them more in ministry, for fear of isolating the other families. As he dealt with this issue, a large focus for him became uniting the families and getting them to work together instead of feeling the need

to compete with one another. He knew that deepening their connection as members with one another was vital to his being able to connect with them.

There were several things that Christopher did to try and unite the church and get everyone working on one accord, both with him and with each other. He invited people who were not actively involved in the church to get involved in the ministry that best suited their gifts and passions. Then he paired members from each of the different families together on ministry projects so that they grew accustomed to working together. He held meetings, trainings and Bible studies for the different ministry leaders so that they began to learn and grow together. Although it took a lot of effort, it proved true that the more the members became united and connected with one another, the more Christopher was able to establish a connection with them. As Christopher addressed these issues, the members began working in a more unified manner and St. Mark was able to grow in its ministry. Then, after serving as St. Mark's pastor for almost three years, Christopher was reassigned to his forth pastorate, and this time it was to a church in a completely different conference, in a different state.

Insights Learned From Metropolitan A. M. E. Zion Church

Christopher was married to his seminary sweetheart during his pastorate at St. Mark, and therefore the decision to accept the bishop's appointment to a church in the New Jersey annual conference was one that he and his wife, also an ordained minister, agreed to. The church to which they were sent was Metropolitan A. M. E. Zion Church located in Ridgewood, New Jersey, about thirty minutes away from New York City. Although prior to his arrival Christopher was told that there were over a hundred

members of the church, when he arrived he discovered that the number was considerably less. Many who were members stopped attending the church during the previous pastor's tenure. As it turns out, the overall impression that Christopher was given about the church panned out to be far from what actually was. He was told that the members desired to have a young pastor who could implement the changes necessary to help them grow, and especially to help bring the youth back into the church. He was also told that the church was not in any debt, was financially stable and had a core group of faithful members who were devoted workers who were looking for change.

As Christopher found out upon his arrival, however, Metropolitan had experienced years of decline, was experiencing financial hardship, and had a ministry that was barely being maintained by a few members. Most of all, emotionally the members of Metropolitan were hurting from the bad pew/pulpit relationship they endured under the last three pastors. Because of bad past relationships with pastors, many at Metropolitan were reluctant to embrace another new pastor, and it was clear that what was told to Christopher about the church's desire and willingness to change was not the sentiment of most of the members. Metropolitan was a church steeped in tradition, and although it was obvious that their tight holding to tradition was part of the reason for their decline, they were reluctant to embrace change.

It did not take long for Christopher to realize that Metropolitan was not a good fit for him and his wife. Many in the church fought to stay the way that they were, and it was clear to Christopher that the church needed to embrace change on so many levels in order to survive, be fruitful, and provide viable, meaningful, and relevant ministry. The church was barely making it, which would have been a welcomed challenge if the

members were ready and willing to progress, but it seemed as though they were not. So, after much prayer and seeking, Christopher and his wife, Juliet, had to decide the route they were to take since they did not believe Metropolitan was a good fit for the type of ministry they felt called to undertake. After finishing the conference year, which put them at Metropolitan for only eight months, Christopher and Juliet sensed the Lord leading them to honorably withdraw from the A.M.E. Zion denomination to pursue planting a church—something that they had been thinking and praying about for a long time.

Although Christopher's time at Metropolitan was short lived, while there he did all he could to try to connect with the people there. He took the time to listen to all of the members concerns. He tried to reassure them that the hurtful issues they experienced under former leadership would not be repeated under his. Christopher was careful to solicit their input and take their concerns into consideration when making decisions. He visited the sick frequently, made the necessary phone calls to members who had been detached from the church for a period of time, and wrote letters to former members. Because Christopher was at Metropolitan during the design and implementation stages of his doctoral process, he also used his doctoral project to try and help him connect with the people at Metropolitan. The part of the project he designed to implement using participants from the congregation, however, did not result in a successful outcome.

The part of his doctoral project that Christopher designed to implement within Metropolitan centered on the aspect of building a level of trust between the pew and pulpit as a means of establishing a connection. This part of the project was comprised of six workshops and three sermons. During the implementation phase, Christopher had great difficulty soliciting members of the church to participate in the doctoral project. He

found twenty members who showed interest in participating in the project, but by the time the orientation date was set, the twenty who said they would be interested in helping dropped to twelve. On the actual orientation day only five people showed up. After several calls to those who said they would participate and other calls to prospective persons, the researcher had only five people to participate in a four week workshop series. Realizing that five participants were not enough for him to successfully implement this portion of his project, Christopher was forced to use only the insights gained from documenting his experiences in new pastorates and the insights gained from the pastors he solicited information from to gather his data for the project. The part in which information would have been gained from his congregation was eliminated.

Perhaps one of the reasons why it was so difficult for Christopher to gain the participation of the members for his project was because he had not yet established a connection with them. He had not yet been at Metropolitan long enough to have done so, and although he wanted to use the project to help him make the connection, it appears as though the connection needed to precede the project. Though he did what he could to try and connect with them, once he and his wife concluded that Metropolitan was not a good fit for their ministry, he realized that when one is not in the right place, making a connection is not the key—moving on to the right place is.

Insights Learned From Various Itinerate Pastors

In addition to gaining insights from his own personal experiences with new pastorates, Christopher sought in this project to gain insights from other itinerate pastors regarding establishing the pew/pulpit connection. By conducting personal interviews and collecting qualitative data using questionnaires and descriptive surveys, Christopher's

findings provide insight into the following three learning objectives: (1) To investigate and identify what are some of the factors that can hinder the establishment of a healthy pew/pulpit connection; (2) To investigate and identify what are some of the factors specifically within the Methodist itinerate church system that may hinder the establishment of a healthy pew/pulpit connection; and (3) To gain insight into the process and methods used to begin connecting with a congregation in the beginning of a new pastorate.

Learning Objective #1- To investigate and identify what are some of the factors that can hinder the establishment of a healthy pew/pulpit connection

One factor that many of the pastors questioned for this project expressed as being able to hinder a healthy pew/pulpit connection is the unwillingness of some members to embrace change. Many of these pastors suggested that change is a hard concept for many church members to embrace. Specifically they noted that the members' desire to hold on to old traditions and practices was a hindrance to the implementation of new models of ministry. Often it was the older members of the congregation who did not see the need to embrace different practices of ministry, but instead wanted the younger generation to bend to their line of thinking, which in some cases resulted in ministry that was not relevant to the younger generation. Often it was the pastor's desire to implement change and the member's reluctance to embrace change that hindered the development of a healthy connection between the two.

Another factor that the itinerant pastors who participated in this study highlighted as contributing to the difficulty of establishing a pew/pulpit connection was the aspect of time. Time was a concern simply because it takes time, often years, for a pastor to gain

the “trust” of the membership regarding him/her as a person and as a leader. They believed also that there was not enough time in a one year assignment to develop and implement a vision and plan for relevant and effective ministry that the members embrace. They emphasized time as being crucial to the overall spiritual growth of a congregation, but the yearly appointments often created a strain. In addition to the one year appointments, many felt the time constraints were compounded by the amount of required conference and district meetings and events that were held every year. These days often seemed to take away from valuable time that could be spent equipping the members of their local church.

Furthermore, another factor that the pastors in the study thought hindered the establishment of a healthy pew/pulpit connection was the effects of bad relationships the congregation had with former pastors. Many of the pastors who participated in this study noted having been sent to congregations that had accrued hurts and scars from past leadership. These past issues of ten made members skeptical of and reluctant to embrace new leadership, and the process of healing old wounds took a great deal of time to undergo. Having to gingerly overcome these issues often created an atmosphere in which the pastor felt as though he/she had to watch every move they made for fear of reopening old emotional wounds. Dealing with the hurtful issues that surfaced under the leadership of their predecessors often only heightened the difficulty in building a rapport with the congregation.

Learning Objective #2 - To investigate and identify what are some of the factors specifically within the Methodist itinerate church system that may hinder the establishment of a healthy pew/pulpit connection

All the itinerant pastors who responded by survey and personal interviews all agreed that the Methodist itinerancy system has it positives and negatives. One of the positives highlighted were that it provides flexibility for a bishop to remove a pastor in the unfortunate event that problems arise that can cause harm to a congregation at a local church. Likewise, it affords a pastor the opportunity to be promoted and to move into a new context that better maximizes his/her gifts and passions. Another positive is that the system has a built-in accountability framework that adds integrity to the task of doing ministry.

The pastors also highlight those factors about the Methodist system that can hinder the establishment of a healthy pew/pulpit connection. In addition to the time constraints produced by the yearly appointments, which was discussed earlier, another factor involves the focus that the pastors are required to put on raising money to pay their financial obligations to the denomination. For many churches in the Methodist system the financial obligations to the denomination has become a strain, as many of the churches are experiencing a decline in membership and stewardship. The burden is experienced by both pastor and the members, and often causes conflict between the two.

One itinerant pastor in the A.M.E. Zion system suggested that the bishop's judgment can play a part in hindering a pew/pulpit connection because often the bishop makes his decisions without the input of the pastor and/or congregation that will be effected by the decision. Often there is little, if any, dialogue with the church and/or the pastor being sent there to help the bishop discern whether a pastor's appointment would

be a good fit with the congregation. The result is that often times a pastor is sent to a congregation where their ministry gifts and/or ministry philosophy do not match the needs of the congregation and surrounding community. As the pastor and congregation realize they are not a good fit with one another, it is difficult for a healthy connection to be established between the two.

Along similar lines, the Methodist itinerant system often struggles with the best placement of pastors because of the limited choice of qualified pastors to send. In many cases adequate training and equipping of ministers is lacking, and many pastors feel unequipped and unprepared to be placed in new pastorate situations. As the congregations begin to suffer the effects of inadequate leadership, a strain is developed between the pastor and members.

In addition, one Untied Methodist pastor exclaimed his emphatic concern for the itinerant system. In his view it has become a maintenance system that no longer is able to capture the Wesleyan spirit of spreading scriptural holiness, evangelism, or mission. Furthermore, he states that many in the itinerancy have become preoccupied with worldly values, salary advancement, and entitlement. Overall, the majority of the pastors surveyed expressed great concern for the Methodist Church's ability to provide relevant and fruitful Christ-centered ministry in its current condition.

Learning Objective #3 – To gain insight into the process and methods used to begin connecting with a congregation in the beginning of a new pastorate.

The pastors who participated in this study seemed to use similar methods in the process of making a connection with their local congregation. One major theme that surfaced was the need for good communication between them and their congregants. Good communication was needed at all levels of the church—to effectively communicate the vision, to adequately equip for ministry, and to develop an open and meaningful pastoral relationship. In this regard, it is critical that their preaching and teaching be communicated in an effective manner. Their messages and studies needed to be clear and relevant for Christian living today.

Another part of the connection making process for the pastors in this study involved their efforts to build a rapport with the congregation and establish trust. They noted the need for the pastor to be intentional in his efforts, taking the time that is necessary to get to know the members of the church, their concerns and their needs. In addition, the pastor needed to model the elements of a healthy relationship, showing love, honesty, and respect for those whom he has been given the charge to pastor.

Some of the pastors suggested that it is especially important to building a good rapport with the leadership of the church and those members who have an influence over other members. This is important so that the members are involved in the process of helping other members connect with the pastor.

With all that was stated, the pastors emphasized the overarching importance and power of prayer in the process of building a healthy pew/pulpit connection. Prayer is the believer's line of communication and connection with God, and as such, prayer must be a

priority for both the pastor and the congregation. It is critical that designated times for prayer and seeking, in which the pastor and the people join together, are built into the framework of the ministry, as this will foster a greater sense of unity among them. In addition, it is often in these moments of prayer that the pastor hears the concerns and needs of the members and can respond accordingly to provide meaningful pastoral care.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

The entire doctoral project and doctoral process has been a rewarding and challenging experience for the researcher, Christopher Zacharias. Since being in the itinerant ministry of the A. M. E. Zion church providing pastoral ministry, it has been his desire to improve as an itinerant pastor. Since he has been moved several times to new ministry contexts over his seven years in ministry, he believed it would be fruitful to investigate and reflect upon the journey, in hopes that the project would assist him and other itinerant pastors enhance their ministry within the itinerant system. As he reflected upon the challenges that being an itinerant pastor presented for connecting with a new congregation, Christopher expected to gain insight into how to help overcome these challenges, and indeed he has. Reflecting upon his own experiences was tremendously helpful, and his time spent speaking with the other pastors was particularly rich. The investigation proved to be a worthy one, as he believes he is better equipped for pastoral ministry in a new congregation, and believes this project will help other pastors as well.

The explorations and discoveries learned during this study helped Chris to realize that his connection with God was the primary key to his ability to establish healthy relationships with the congregations that he has been blessed to pastor. Christopher

realized how easy it can be for a pastor to be so focused on doing the "work" of ministry that he/she forsakes time spent with the "who" of ministry—Jesus the Christ. As the Gospel writer, John notes, Jesus said it best—that believers must stay connected to the True Vine. Once both the pastor and the members make staying connected to the Lord the main priority, their relationship with each other is well on its way toward developing fruitfully.

In addition, Christopher learned that making a connection with any congregation involves several components. These components include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) preaching that is revelatory, relevant and applicable (2) establishing a healthy bond of trust with the members (3) nurturing the development of relationships through pastoral care, counseling, and visitation (4) being reasonably available and accessible to the congregation (5) building community relationships and becoming visible within the local community (6) learning to listen to the input, cares and concerns of those in the congregation, and (7) leading the congregation according to the will of God in an effective manner that encourages them to follow.

Christopher learned a lot from the actual design of the project as well. The qualitative research methodology that Christopher used in this project was very valuable in that it encouraged him to think through what would make for the richest investigation. His exploratory approach allowed aspects of the project to surface that Christopher would not have thought of, and the open-ended nature of the investigation caused him to think more thoroughly and critically about what would be meaningful to discover about the pew/pulpit connection in a new pastorate.

Although the design, implementation and evaluation of the project did successfully meet the learning objectives that Christopher sought to gain insight into, the project was not without its limitations. It may prove worthwhile for a more thorough study of the itinerant ministry system to be undertaken on a much larger scale than this project sought out to do. Gaining insight from a much larger range of pastors and congregations regarding the challenges of doing itinerant ministry would be a valuable resource for the Methodist church. Such an investigation would be worthy of gaining information from all Methodist based traditions.

Another area for further research involves gaining insight from itinerant pastors who were planting or had recently planted a church concerning what is needed to establish a connection with a new group of believers. Because in a new church there is not a history of issues that the pastor has to overcome, pastors in this line of ministry may be able to provide a different perspective about the pew/pulpit connection.

In conclusion, although the itinerant system of ministry has long been in existence, not much research has been done to investigate the changes that must be made for it to be able to provide relevant and fruitful ministry in this post-modern era. Christopher hopes that the investigation into the one aspect of itinerant ministry that this project is focused on will be of great use to those who seek to provide significant ministry within an itinerant system. especially to those of the Methodist tradition and would inspire other itinerant pastors of different faith traditions to reflect, evaluate, and provide means of improving such a viable means of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX

CONNECTING THE PEW AND PULPIT SURVEY

1. Please list the denomination affiliation you are presently serving(ex. AME, AMEZ, UM, CME)

   _____

2. How long have you been at your present ministry context?
   a) 0-6 months
   b) 6 months to a year
   c) 1yr-2yrs
   d) 2 yrs-5yrs
   e) 5 yrs or more

3. What is your gender?
   a) _____male b)_____female

4. What is your age?
   a) ___18-25
   b) ___25-30
   c) ___30-40
   d) ___40-50
   e) ___50 and older

5. What is your family status?
   a)___single(under 25 living with parents)
   b)___singe(under 25 and not living with parents)
   c)___single(over 25 living with parents)
   d)___single(over 25 not living with parents)
   e)___married, living with spouse(first marriage)
   f)___married, living with spouse(after a divorce)
   g)___married, living with spouse(after the death of other spouse)
   j)____other

6a. What is the highest grade you have completed?

   a)____High School c)___Some College e)___Masters
   b)____GED d)___College f)___Doctorate

6b. What is your current ministry context?
   a)____urban c)____inner city
   b)____suburban d)____rural
   e)____other

7. What age ranges does most of your congregation fall under?
   a)____0-18 c)____30-50 e)____70 and older
   b)____18-30 d)____50-70

8. What are some of the major obstacles you face in building a relationship with a local congregation within an itinerant system while knowing that your pastoral assignment is only one year at a time?

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. Please describe the difficulties in providing effective pastoral leadership to any local congregation within an itinerant system knowing that at the end of the year there is a possibility you can be moved to a new congregation?_____

_____

_____

_____

10. Knowing that each congregation you enter has an already establish congregation, culture, and perceive ideas of what the church is suppose to be about how do you handle these already existing mentalities?

_____

_____

11. What are the major adjustments in both thinking and practice that your congregation must be willing to make in order to embrace the ministry needs of today's culture?

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. Do you feel the itinerant ministry is an effect way to meet the ministry needs of this church culture today?

13. Have you ever gone into another context uncertain that God has called you to that new context? If so why did you go?

CONNECTING PEW AND PULPIT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Please describe your present ministry context?
2. How would you describe your pastoral role as pastor?
3. How would you describe your leadership style been an advantage or a disadvantage to helping connect with your congregation?
4. How has the pastoral history affected your pastoral leadership?
5. How has the history of the church affected the people you have to deal with and what did you do about it?
6. What kinds of issues did you have to resolve to deal with your present congregation?
7. What steps are you taking to help your local congregation to understand you as pastor, your leadership style, and to embrace your vision for the church?
8. What did you have to do to help your congregation trust you or how did you develop trust with your congregation?
9. How do you deal with difficult people in your church?
10. How much of yourself are you willing to give to the congregation to help develop a connection with your congregation?

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